

List of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A web mat comprised of polymer fibers bound by about 5-30 wt. percent, based on the dry weight of the mat, of a formaldehyde containing polymer resin latex binder providing a good hot strength at 200 degrees C. of no more than about 1 percent elongation, in the machine direction ~~and good elasticity to the web~~, the resin containing at least about ~~0.75~~ 2.5 wt. percent and up to about 7.5 wt. percent of a bisulfite compound, based on the dry weight of the formaldehyde containing resin in the binder.
2. (Currently amended) The mat web of claim 1 wherein the resin is selected from the group consisting of formaldehyde fortified latex polymers which may be composed of ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer, styrene-acrylic copolymer, vinyl-acrylic copolymer, styrene-butadiene-acrylonitrile copolymer, or acrylic copolymer.
3. (Currently amended) The mat web of claim 2 wherein the bisulfite is ammonium bisulfite.
4. (Currently amended) The mat web of claim 3 1 wherein the bisulfite is ammonium bisulfite.
5. (Currently amended) The mat web of claim 1 wherein the bisulfite compound is present in an amount of at least about 5 ~~4-25~~ wt. percent.
6. (Currently amended) The mat web of claim 2 wherein the bisulfite compound is present in an amount of at least about 5 ~~4-25~~ wt. percent.
7. (Currently amended) The mat web of claim 3 wherein the bisulfite compound is present in an amount of at least about 5 ~~4-25~~ wt. percent.
8. (Currently amended) The mat web of claim 1 wherein the binder is an emulsified styrene butadiene acrylonitrile copolymer latex ~~bisulfite compound is present in an amount of at least 2.5 wt. percent.~~

9. (Currently amended) The mat web of claim 2 wherein the binder is an emulsified styrene butadiene acrylonitrile copolymer latex ~~bisulfite compound is present in an amount of at least 2.5 wt. percent.~~
10. (Currently amended) The mat web of claim 3 wherein the binder is an emulsified styrene butadiene acrylonitrile copolymer latex ~~bisulfite compound is present in an amount of at least 2.5 wt. percent.~~
11. (Currently amended) The mat web of claim 8 wherein the polymer fibers are polyester, the ~~ammonium~~ bisulfite compound is ammonium bisulfite, the binder content of the web is in the range of about 16-24 wt. percent and the basis weight of the web is in the range of about 150-200 gms/sq. meter.
12. (Currently amended) The mat web of claim 9 wherein the polymer fibers are polyester, the ~~ammonium~~ bisulfite compound is ammonium bisulfite, the binder content of the web is in the range of about 16-24 wt. percent and the basis weight of the web in the range of about 150-200 gms/sq. meter.
13. (Currently amended) The mat web of claim 5 ~~40~~ wherein the polymer fibers are polyester, the ~~ammonium~~ bisulfite compound is ammonium bisulfite, the binder content of the web is in the range of about 16-24 wt. percent and the basis weight of the web is in the range of about 150-200 gms/sq. meter.
14. (Withdrawn) A method of making a polymer fiber web by melting a polymer, converting the melt to fibers, attenuating the fibers to the desired fiber diameter, collecting the fibers in a random pattern on a collecting surface, applying a latex formaldehyde containing polymer resin binder to the web in an amount that the binder content of the dry web will be in the range of about 5-30 wt. percent, based on the weight of the dry web, and drying the web and curing the polymer resin binder to bond the polymer fibers together to form a nonwoven polymer fiber web, said polymer resin being selected from the group consisting of formaldehyde fortified latex polymers which may be composed of ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer, styrene-acrylic copolymer, vinyl-acrylic copolymer, styrene-butadiene-acrylonitrile copolymer, or acrylic copolymer, the improvement comprising adding about 0.75-7.5 wt.

percent, based on the dry weight of the formaldehyde containing resin, of a bisulfite compound to the latex binder before applying the latex binder to the collected polymer fibers.

15. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 14 wherein about 1.25-7.5 wt. percent of the bisulfite compound is added to the latex binder before applying the latex binder to the collected polymer fibers.

16. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 14 wherein about 2.5-5 wt. percent of the bisulfite compound is added to the latex binder before applying the latex binder to the collected polymer fibers.

17. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 14 wherein the polymer is polyester and the bisulfite compound is ammonium bisulfite.

18. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 15 wherein the polymer is polyester and the bisulfite compound is ammonium bisulfite.

19. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 16 wherein the polymer is polyester and the bisulfite compound is ammonium bisulfite.